

## REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 24, 2004. Claims 19 to 25, 28 and 29 are in the application, of which Claim 19 is the sole independent claim. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 30, which had been withdrawn from further consideration as allegedly being directed to an invention that it independent or distinct from that originally claimed, has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without prejudice to Applicants' right to filing of a divisional application directed to the cancelled subject matter.

Claim 24, which continues to be withdrawn from further consideration as allegedly being directed to a non-elected species, has been maintained. Rejoinder of Claim 24 is respectfully requested, upon an indication of allowable subject matter in independent Claim 19, from which it depends.

A replacement drawing sheet for Figure 2 is submitted herewith, so as to correct the reference numeral noted at page 3 of the Office Action.

Claims 19 to 22, 25 and 27 to 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent 6,097,407 (Terasawa), and Claim 23 was rejected under § 103(a) over Terasawa in view of U.S. Patent 5,244,087 (Hikake). These rejections are respectfully traversed, as detailed below.

Specifically, in entering the rejection of Claim 27, the Office Action took the position (at page 5 thereof) that the release cap of Claim 28 and the slit-forming member of Claim 27 had not been positively recited as part of the storing structure of Claim 19. Applicants respectfully disagree, but nevertheless have amended independent Claim 19 so as to recite a slit-forming member, with changes in wording so as to emphasize that the slit-forming member forms part of the claimed storing structure. For consistency with this amendment, Claim 27 has been cancelled. In addition, the specification has been amended at pages 36 and 42, for clear compliance with the mandates of 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(d)(1), so that the terminology used in specification provides clear antecedence for terminology used in the claims.

As so amended, the invention concerns a storing structure for an ink jet head comprising a storing member to contain the ink jet head, a cap for covering a nozzle face of the ink jet head in a non-contact state with respect to the nozzle face, and a slit-forming member for insertion through a slit in an elastic member of the ink jet head. Specifically, the elastic member is provided on a liquid introduction portion of the ink jet head which further comprises a nozzle for discharging liquid and a liquid storing portion for storing liquid to be supplied to the nozzle. Ink not including a coloring material is contained in the nozzle of the ink jet head and air is present in an area other than the nozzle of the ink jet head, and air in the ink jet head is capable of moving between an exterior of the ink jet head and an exterior side of the ink jet head through the slit.

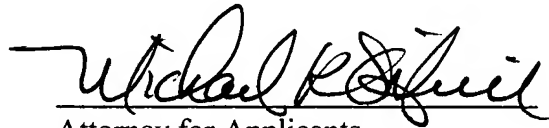
The applied patents to Terasawa and Hikake are not seen to disclose or to suggest the foregoing structure, and in particular are not seen to disclose or to suggest a

storing structure that includes a slit-forming member for insertion through a slit in an elastic member of a liquid introduction portion of a stored ink jet head. In this regard, the Office Action does not contend that either of these two patents makes any such disclosure.

It is therefore respectfully submitted that the claims herein recite subject matter allowable over the applied art, and such action is courteously solicited. In particular, rejoinder of Claim 24 is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael K. O'Neill", is written over a horizontal line.

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